

Stages and Kansas Special Education

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal assessment software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances Kansas's special education assessment because:

- 1. Stages aligns with the Kansas Extended Curricular Standards in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.**
- 2. Stages generates evidence of learner performance for Kansas Alternate Assessment by documenting activities.**
- 3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.**
- 4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

1. Stages aligns with the Kansas Extended Curricular Standards in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

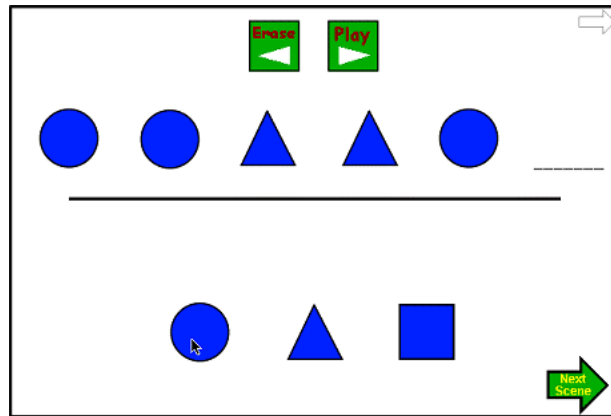
Stages ensures meaningful and effective access to general curriculum areas for learners with disabilities. The learner's IEP team can also use Stages to help determine if alternate assessment or assessment with modifications is appropriate by providing informal benchmarks of learner progress in Mathematics, Reading, and Writing general curriculum areas. The section, "How Stages Correlates with Kansas Extended Curricular Standards," shows how Stages activities help the learner gain access to the general curriculum and provides brief descriptions of the activities as a reference.

2. Stages generates evidence of learner performance for Kansas Alternate Assessment by documenting activities.

During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to capture a learner-generated product as a benchmark. At the end of each activity, a report with instructional data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The instructor may wish to then print that screen, save the screenshot, or save the information as a text-format electronic file as examples of student work for evidence collection.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session. The data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two adults from the instructional team can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid.

Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructional team needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.



Example screen shot from Stage Four: Create Patterns

3. Stages provides learners with the opportunity for increased independence.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating skills with minimal supervision. Many Stages activities include accessible choice-making opportunities. Functional skills activities include real-life community settings.

4. Stages assists the learner's IEP team with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools..

An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's instructor, parents, and others in the IEP team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the Kansas assessment cycle for special education. The Stages software is a comprehensive benchmark tool to assist the instructional team in collecting valuable information on learner skill achievement, determine assessment strategy, and discover the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with Kansas Extended Curricular Standards¹

Extended Reading & Writing Benchmarks and Indicators

Standard 1: Reading and Receptive Communication

Benchmark 1 -- The learner demonstrates observable responses to a variety of relevant stimuli.

Indicators

The learner:

1. has a level of alertness that is influenced by external events
8. understands cause and effect

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage One: All Activities

- Stage One includes short animations to determine the learner's ability to attend to an activity and use an appropriate input device. The activities present a visual, auditory, or multisensory prompt that encourages the learner to continue activating the device.

4. responds to an auditory stimuli
6. responds to visual stimuli
12. follows directions

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Activities in every Stage provide the learner with opportunities to attend to spoken, written, or multisensory instructions. The observation forms at each Stage help the instructor record the learner's behavioral response to instructions.

11. matches

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: Levels of Representation: Photo, Drawing, Symbol

- In these activities, learners have a chance to view objects on an initial screen, then identify the same object on subsequent screens.

¹ Information from Eligibility Criteria for the Kansas Alternate Assessment (and the Kansas Extended Curricular Standards for Reading & Writing; and Mathematics (Accessed July 22, 2002).

Sources: <http://www.ksde.org/assessment/eligibilitycriteria2112699.htm>

<http://ww2.nekesc.org/ksde/ecsfrw/ecsfrw.pdf> (March 2002)

<http://ww2.nekesc.org/ksde/hot/xmath.pdf> (December 2001)

Benchmark 2 -- The learner understands a basic vocabulary.

Indicators

The learner:

2. responds to objects
3. responds to photographs

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: *Object identification:* Animals, Toys, Food

Category Identification: Animals, Clothing, Vehicles

Function Identification: Clothing, Toys, Vehicles

Stage Six: *Explore:* Telling Time, Using Money, Getting Dressed, Looking at Signs, Using Objects

- Stage Three gives the learner an opportunity to independently choose desired activities and responses to questions. Objects at three different levels of graphic representation (symbol, drawing, and photograph) are presented to the learner.
- Stage Six *Explore* activities give the learner an opportunity to use an input device to select items on the screen to hear and/or read information about it.

4. responds to spoken words / manual signs
5. responds to a symbol system (graphic or Braille)
6. relates sounds to symbols including phonemic awareness
7. recognizes frequently used (sight or common) words

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Reading Readiness:* Letter ID

Stage Five: *Reading:* Meaning, Context (High-Frequency words)

- Stage Four *Letter ID* presents the learner with letters using simple animations. The learner identifies upper and lower case letters when presented with prompts.
- Stage Five *Meaning* includes Dolch words at five different levels of difficulty. *Context* includes ‘high frequency words’ (*is, a, the, you, to, and, in, of, that, it*). The learner chooses the correct word to complete a sentence.

Benchmark 3 -- The learner understands the concept of sequencing.

Indicators

The learner:

2. discerns patterns (objects, symbols, pictures, sounds, letters, etc.)
4. follows a story sequence

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: *Reading:* Sounds (rhyming words)

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

- Stage Five *Sounds* first gives the learner an opportunity to listen to several rhyming sentence pairs. Then, the learner demonstrates ability to find rhyming word pairs, given a word wall.
- Stage Six *Stories* are self-paced short passages about real people in scenarios related to daily living.

Benchmark 4 -- The learner finds and uses information from a variety of media.

Indicators

The learner:

8. uses library reference materials

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Reading: Letters (alphabetization)

- Stage Five *Letters* gives the learner a chance to demonstrate the ability to alphabetize words by first and second (or third) letter, in preparation for learning how to use reference materials.

Benchmark 5 -- The learner recognizes and interprets a variety of messages/information.

Indicators

The learner:

1. understands the basic message of text

4. demonstrates oral / silent reading skills that focus on the meaning of the text

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Two: Nouns, Verbs, Attributes

Stage Five: Reading: Meaning

Stage Six: Stories: Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

Explore and Assess: Recognizing Signs

- Stage Two activities expose the learner to vocabulary using familiar objects such as animals and vehicles at three different levels of graphic abstraction: photograph, drawing, and symbol (from the Mayer-Johnson PCS libraries).
- In the Stage Five *Meaning* activities the learner selects the picture in a scene that illustrates the meaning of the word.
- In Stage Six *Stories* the learner can follow text on the screen as it is spoken (Multisensory) or read silently (Visual).

Standard 2 – Writing / Expressive Communication

Benchmark 2 -- The learner uses a basic vocabulary to label objects, comment, direct attention, and convey ideas.

Indicators

The learner:

1. produces natural gestures

2. produces spoken words [/ manual signs]

3. expresses the function of objects

4. uses a symbol system

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: Function Identification: Clothing, Toys, Vehicles

Stage Six: Explore and Assess: Using Objects

- Stage Three *Function Identification* activities the learner finds a specific object by understanding how it is used. Familiar objects from other Stage Three activities are presented to the learner. Mayer-Johns PCS Library symbols are included in prompts.
- Stage Six *Stories* are self-paced activities with short passages about real people performing activities of daily living. The learner can follow text on the screen as it is spoken (Multisensory) or read silently (Visual).

Benchmark 3 -- The learner uses verbal and nonverbal communication to convey information.

Indicators

The learner:

2. comments and describes
4. uses written language to convey information

and

Benchmark 4 -- The learner produces written language.

Indicators

The learner:

2. writes personal information
3. chooses an idea to write about
6. uses a variety of nouns, verbs, and adjectives in writing

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Stories

- As in other Stage Seven activities, *Making Stories* provides the learner with an on-screen keyboard and text-to-speech capability. The learner makes an independent selection of a photograph or imports a graphic to display while writing as a prompt for details and ideas.

4. writes appropriate words and phrases
5. produces clear and meaningful sentences or phrases
7. writes complete sentences

(also Benchmark 2.5: expresses multi-word sequences)

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Words: Copy Words, High Frequency Words, Building Rhymes

Making Sentences: Building Sentences

- Stage Seven *Copy Words* speaks a word and/or shows the word to the learner. The learner then types the word using regular or on-screen keyboard. *High Frequency Words* and *Building Rhymes* asks the learner to complete sentence captions. *Building Sentences* gives the learner a chance to form messages without requiring keyboard skills. The text-to-speech capability in these activities give the non-verbal learner a way to demonstrate spoken expression.

Standard 4: Literature Response

Benchmark 2 -- The learner evaluates or interprets literature.

Indicators

The learner:

1. chooses or shows preference for stories

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

- Given a choice of five stories, the learner uses an appropriate input device to independently select a story to read and/or listen to.

Standard 5 – Communicate for Social Interaction

Benchmark 2 -- The learner sustains interaction.

Indicators

The learner:

1. listens attentively
2. recognize when it is appropriate to respond

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Observation Forms in every Stage provide the IEP team with guided opportunities to record learner behavior and interactions such as attentiveness.

Stage Five: *Problem Solving:* Tic-Tac-Toe

- The learner demonstrates turn-taking when playing this classic game with the computer or with a classmate.

Benchmark 4 -- The learner engages in appropriate conversation.

Indicators

The learner:

3. participates in group discussion

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: *Making Stories*

- Using the text-to-speech capability in this writing activity, learners can express a response to group discussion and play it for classmates to hear.

Extended Mathematics Benchmarks and Indicators

Standard 1: Numbers and Computation

Benchmark 1 -- The learner demonstrates number sense in a variety of situations.

Indicators

The learner:

1. understands the concept of one
2. counts by rote
3. establishes 1 to 1 correspondence
6. understands concepts of numbers greater than 1

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Counting

- Stage Four *Counting* asks the learner to count up to 10 objects on the screen and includes a number line.

5. recognizes coins and currency
8. understands the values of coins and currency

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Explore: Using Money

Assess: Money Names, Counting Money, Money Equivalents

- Stage Six activities include realistic scenarios to help the learner connect money concepts with daily living. Coins and bills are shown at correct relative sizes on the screen.

10. recognizes fractional parts of a whole object

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Math Facts (+, -, x, ÷), Word Problems (+, -, x, ÷), Geometry

- The Stage Five *Fractions* activity includes parts of whole objects and parts of groups of objects.

Benchmark 2 -- The learner recognizes number systems in a variety of situations.

Indicators

The learner:

1. matches like numerals
2. counts manipulatives or other objects
3. recognizes and / or labels numerals
4. generates whole numerals
5. establishes number / numerical correspondence

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Number ID, Counting

- Stage Four *Number ID* presents the learner with a telephone or an elevator scene and includes numbers from 0 to 10. *Counting* includes on-screen manipulatives and number line.

7. identifies symbols for dollar and cent notations

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Explore: Money

Assess: Counting Money, Money Equivalents

- Stage Six activities include coins up to \$.25 and bills up to \$20.

Benchmark 3 -- The learner uses numerical estimation in a variety of situations.

Indicators

The learner:

2. identifies and / or estimates; more, less, or equal

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Estimation

- Stage Five *Estimation* .

Benchmark 4 -- The learner demonstrates an understanding of computation in a variety of situations.

Indicators

The learner:

1. understands add means combine / put together; subtract means take-away
2. adds one more to a set
3. adds or subtracts to create new set
5. understands multiply means adding equal groups; divide means separating into equal groups
6. understands mathematical symbols (+, -, x, ÷, =)
7. uses one or more computational methods to add, subtract, multiply, and/or divide whole numbers
9. performs 1 step practical word problems

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Math Facts (+, -, x, ÷), Word Problems (+, -, x, ÷), Geometry

- Stage Five *Math Facts* activities include addition and subtraction with and without regrouping; and a number line to simplify answer input. *Word Problems* provides on-screen graphics to help the learner compute the answer for some problems. *Geometry* includes computation of perimeter, area and volume.

Standard 2: Algebra

Benchmark 1 -- The learner demonstrates an understanding of relationships in patterns in a variety of situations.

Indicators

The learner:

1. identifies patterns presented in a variety of formats: numerical, visual, oral, kinesthetic, pictorial, tabular, graphical, or listing
2. creates a pattern
3. matches or generalizes patterns

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Explore Patterns, Continue/Fill-In Patterns, Create Patterns

- Stage Four *Patterns* activities give the learner a chance to play sequences of shape, color and sound, fill in the missing object in sequences, or create a sequence using several shape choices.

Benchmark 2 -- The learner demonstrates an understanding of variables, equations, inequalities, and functions in a variety of situations.

Indicators

The learner:

3. understands the equivalencies of coins and currencies

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Assess: Money Equivalents

- In this activity, the learner is presented with a coin or bill and is asked to choose the correct combination of coins representing the same amount of money.

Benchmark 3 -- The learner demonstrates the use of models to show relationships in a variety of situations.

Indicators

The learner:

2. demonstrates understanding of categorization

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: Category Identification: Animals, Clothing, Vehicles

- Stage Three *Category* activities show the learner several objects and asks the learner to select the object that best fits the category.

Standard 3: Geometry

Benchmark 1 -- The learner demonstrates an understanding of geometric figures and their properties.

Indicators

The learner:

3. recognizes and / or labels shapes

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Shape ID

- *Shape ID* presents circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, and ovals in scenes and in isolation (photographs and drawings) for the learner to identify.

Benchmark 2 -- The learner estimates and measures using standard and nonstandard units in a variety of situations.

Indicators

The learner:

1. orders by a geometric attribute
4. tells time

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Six: Explore and Assess: Telling Time

- Stage Six *Telling Time* includes digital and analog clocks.

Benchmark 3 -- The learner demonstrates an understanding of spatial properties and relationships in a variety of situations.

Indicators

The learner:

3. understands common spatial sense language

5. recognizes two [or three-] dimensional objects [as they would appear from near far or different angles]

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Spatial Relationships

Shape ID

- *Spatial Relationships* gives the learner a chance to demonstrate knowledge of relative location vocabulary such as 'left/right' or 'behind/in front.' *Shape ID* presents circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, and ovals in scenes and in isolation (photographs and drawings) for the learner to identify.

Standard 4: Data

Benchmark 2 -- The learner collects and uses data to make decisions and solve problems.

Indicators

The learner:

4. answers questions about data

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Charts and Graphs

- Stage Five *Charts and Graphs* includes questions about pie charts, bar graphs, and line graphs. Familiar topics such as ice cream flavors and animals help keep the activity engaging for the learner.